

## **The Register-Guard**

**Oregon**

**July 8, 2006**

### **Police support gun trace limits**

The recent editorial about the Firearms Corrections and Improvements Act of 2006 (H.R. 5005) titled "What you don't know...", (Register-Guard, June 24) was misleading.

The bill guarantees that only law enforcement agencies, when investigating a crime in which a firearm was used, will have access to manufacturer, wholesaler and dealer records that trace the ownership path of the firearm. Congress has limited the release of trace information in this manner in annual legislation for several years, and H.R. 5005 will make the limitations stronger and permanent.

Contrary to what the editorial claimed, police officers will not be subject to "felony prosecution" for improperly divulging trace information. H.R. 5005 creates no criminal penalties for such information sharing.

Furthermore, because H.R. 5005 limits the release of trace information, it protects police officers' lives and preserves the integrity of the investigations they conduct. For that reason, such limitations are supported by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Fraternal Order of Police.

The approach you advocate, making trace information public, would tip criminals off when they are being investigated.

It is clear from the editorial that The Register-Guard supports groups that would like to obtain firearm trace information for political purposes. But the firearm tracing system, paid for by American taxpayers, was established as a tool for law enforcement. It was not established to help anti-gun groups promote their views.

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